THRIVING ON PERSECUTION.

The Gypsies of Hungary Still Maintain Their Ancient Customs Unchanged.

In Hungary there are, according to a rough estimate, about one hundred and fifty thousand gypsies, vagabonds who wander about the country with their carts and horses, accompanied by their women and children; and though at one time persecuted as unbelievers and hunted to death as sorcerers and poisoners, the cruel edicts which enjoined such treatment were never sympathized in by the Hungarian people. The result is, as we learn from "The Peoples of the World," that the gypsies have increased, and, in their own thriftless, squalid fashion, prospered, despite the hard usage they have received at the hands of their rulers. Indeed, the Hungarian kings have more than once protected them as a "poor wandering people without a country, and whom all the world rejected," and granted them safe conducts to go wherever seemed good to them, with their troops of donkeys and horses. Joseph II. of Austria tried to settle them as agriculturists, and had huts built for them. But instead of occupying the comfortable dwellings themselves, they stabled their cattle in them and pitched their tents outside. Then, to prevent their corn from sprouting, they boiled it before sowing; and though their children were taken from them and trained up into habits of work under Magyar and German peasants, these wildlings soon escaped and joined their parents, without having learned anything from their forcible apprenticeship to civilization. It is affirmed that a gypsy who had actually risen to the rank of an officer in the Austrian army disappeared one day and was found six months afterward with a band of Zingari encamped on the heath. A young Slovack peasant fell in love with and married a gypsy girl, but in his absence she escaped to the woods, and, when discovered, was sleeping under the skies and feeding on hedgehogs, after the fashion of the race from whom she had been taken. Abbe Liszt, charmed with the talent for music displayed by a gypsy boy, took him to Paris and tried to train the little lad. But all in vain. The moment he saw his own people in Vienna his delight was indescribable; there was no longer any hope of keeping him under the restraint of polite life.

FLAX CULTURE IN EUROPE.

Russia Grows More of This Crop Than Any Country in the World

Our principal supply of the raw material, says Chambers' Journal, is imported from Russia, where the plant has long been, and still is, cultivated more extensively than in any other country in the world; but there the culture of the crop and preparation of the fiber receive less care and attention than in any other flax-producing country. This neglect may be accounted for by the immense tracts under crop and also by much thinner sowing than is practiced in other countries in order to give the plant greater strength and more numerous branches to prevent it being laid during the violent thunderstorms that prevail about the time it is in flower. The result of this treatment, however, is a coarse fiber, and also a very much inferior yield to that grown thicker and under more favorable circumstances of soil and attention in its early stages. Germany, Austria and France will follow Russia as flax-producing countries, and in each of these an average area of over two hundred thousand acres is kept under this crop. In Holland flax is grown principally for the seed, and the planting and growth of the crop, as well as the time for pulling, is regulated for this purpose. By properly maturing the seed the quality of the fiber is injured and renders the subsequent process more difficult; but the Dutch farmers are amply remunerated by the high price obtained for the seed, which has for agricultural purposes a world-wide fame, and is chiefly sown in Britain, although Riga seed is also used and preferred by some growers as being more hardy. It is Belgium, however, to which we must turn to see flax in the highest state of cultivation, where nothing is neglected that can in any measure improve the quantity, and more especially of the quality of the crop. Here proper rotation of the crops, superior tillage and liberal manuring of the land are attended to in a manner not seen elsewhere, and to this the careful, plodding Belgian farmers owe their success in raising other crops as well as flax, and which has earned for them the reputation they enjoy of being the most successful agriculturists in the world.

EXTRAVAGANT MILL GIRLS.

They Receive Fairly Good Wages, But Are Averse to Saving.

In the great carpet mills of Philadelphia, where, it is claimed, more carpet is made in a single ward than in the whole of England, the actual competition of women with men is a marked feature; in many cases, says Lippincott's Magazine, they earn equal pay for the same work. In these mills the barlers earn from $6 to $10 a week. They work from 7 in the morning till 6 at night, with half an hour off for dinner. Those who do not live at home can get good board for $3 a week, leaving quite a large margin for dress or for savings. It would be of great benefit to them if they could acquire the habit of systematic saving, but to this they are generally averse. Some of them do save, however, and it is no uncommon thing for a mill girl to save $300 or $400 before marriage. The first few years of married life are safely tided over by the united savings of the couple, and it is unusual for the children not to begin work by the time they are 14. They can earn $4.50 and upwards, and this sum, as a rule, goes into the family treasury. Thus there will often be five or six bread-winners in a family, and, if thrifty, a neat little sum may be laid away. Thrift and economy are, however, rather exceptional virtues among the mill workers. They eat, twice a day, the most expensive meat (15 and 18 cents per pound), and pay extravagant sums for early vegetables.

THE SNAKE CATCHER.

Odd Occupation of a Mississippi Houseboat Couple.

The selling of snakes to scientific men, to manufacturers who use the skins and to museums is a business which a man and his wife who live in a Mississippi houseboat engage in. The strange couple were interviewed the other day by the reporter for a New Orleans paper. The man does most of the snake catching, and, although he has been bitten several times, he considers the experience only a trifling incident of his trade. "A rattlesnake, for instance, when pursued," he says, "coils and is ready to defend himself. I flip a stone or small piece of stick at him; he uncoils and starts off, but before he can again coil I have him back of the neck. No, I use no stick—nothing but my bare hands. You may laugh, too, when I tell you that our snake lore teaches us not to hunt when the wind is in the northwest. If we do we find no snakes. The principal seasons of the year for us are spring and fall; the snakes are then fat and produce lots of oil." Of all the snakes in the United States only three families, he says, can be classed as deadly. "But," he adds, "these families comprise about thirty-two species, distributed as follows: Rattlesnakes, seven; cotton-mouths, eight; copperheads, seventeen, the two latter being moccasins and dwellers in the swamps and low places." The snake catcher's method of treating bites is as follows: "When bitten I immediately tie a band above the wound, cutting the latter deeply in order to cause it to bleed freely, and to reach below the extremity pierced by the fang. The cut is then sucked, or warm, newly killed flesh is applied, and the remedies are then rubbed into the wound, neutralizing the poison."

The Etiquette of the Fan.

There is an endless etiquette in the use of fans, and with the Japanese the fan is an emblem of life. The rivet end is regarded as the starting point and as the rays of the fan expand so the road of life widens out toward a prosperous future. It is also said that the Japanese ogi originally took its shape from their wonderful mountain Fuji-san, which represents to them all that is beautiful, high and holy. When one begins to understand all this there comes a salutary feeling of ignorance, and we perceive that the Japanese may claim to be among the great symbolists in the world. A continuance of such study might turn the most hardened European into a Japonophile.

Cornmeal as a Cosmetic.

Cornmeal, the yellow Indian meal of our pantries, is said to be one of the best of cosmetics. A jar of it should be kept on the toilet stand, and after the face has been washed in really hot water with a pure, unscented soap, the meal should be rubbed all over it, well and gently. Then it should be dusted out of the hair and eyebrows, the face wiped lightly over with a bit of soft old linen, and the result promised by those who have tried it is a delightfully smooth and satiny skin.